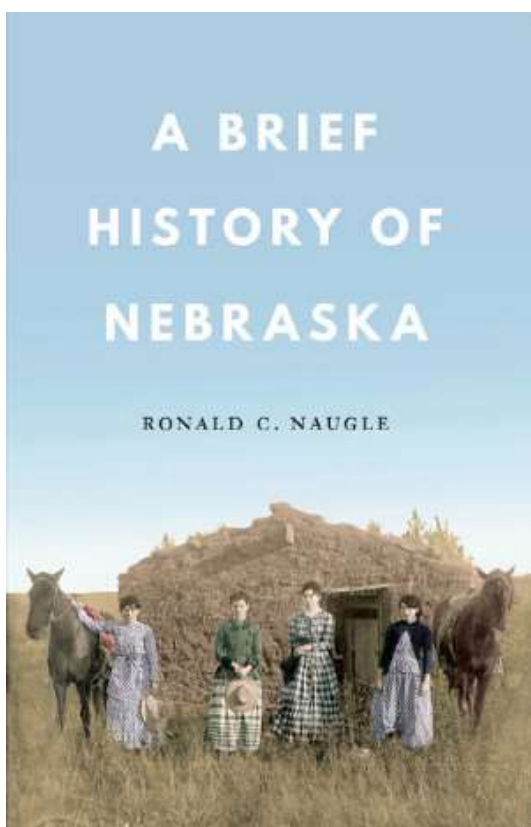




Our new book is here!



At last, Nebraska has a short treatment of its long history. We've published *A Brief History of Nebraska* by Ronald C. Naugle. It tells the story from prehistoric times up to the present, all in a small 143-page paperback. It's \$14.95 at our sites, via [Amazon](#), or by phone at 402-471-3447.

Naugle, a leading Nebraska historian, sums up a complex story in an easy-to-read narrative divided into short chapters. It's a great gift to introduce people to our history, and a way for history buffs to see the "big picture." [Read an excerpt.](#)

New National Register Properties

The towns of Tekamah, Emerson, and Venango are the proud homes of properties to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Learn more about them (and see photos) [here](#).



Lincoln Chicken War!

Sometimes it takes a good guy with a chicken to stop a bad guy with a chicken.

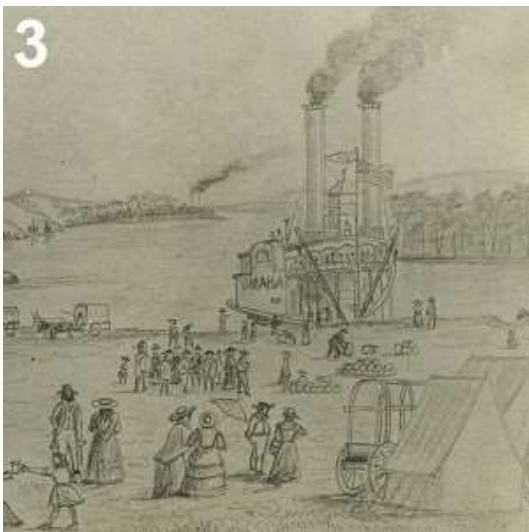
Consider this strange tale about the founder of today's *Lincoln Journal Star* and his revenge on his hen-raising neighbors. [Keep reading](#)



Chimney Rock, Neligh Mill featured in statewide summer travel programs

Two History Nebraska sites are participating in summer programs designed to get you out on the road. Chimney Rock National Historic Site is part of the **Nebraska Passport** program, while Neligh Mill State Historic Site is on the **Great Park Pursuit**. Both of these programs are fun ways to visit Nebraska sites and win prizes. [Find out more.](#)

Which of these is the earliest known
picture of a Nebraska event?

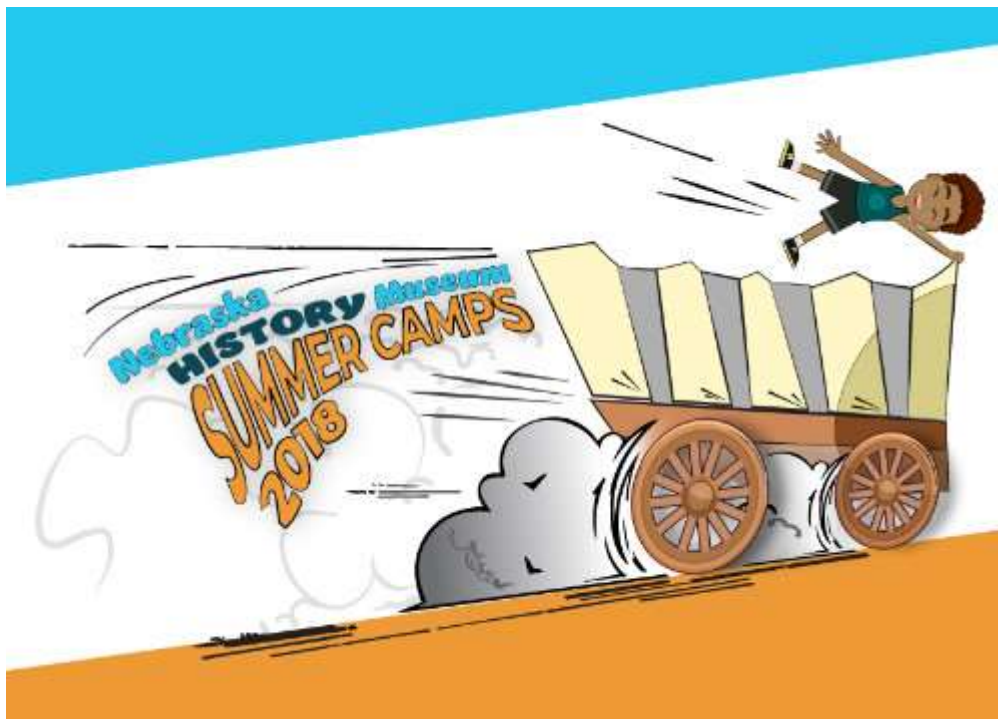


Make your guess, then click the link to see larger versions...and the answer.

[Read more.](#)

June Events

It's not too late to register for Summer Kids Camps. The "camps" are daylong events scheduled for June 7, 13, and 28 (with July dates, too). [Learn more here](#). Other Nebraska History Museum events include Noon History Bites on June 4 (topic: Mari Sandoz), and a Victorian Free Family Fun Day on June 9. [Events Calendar](#)



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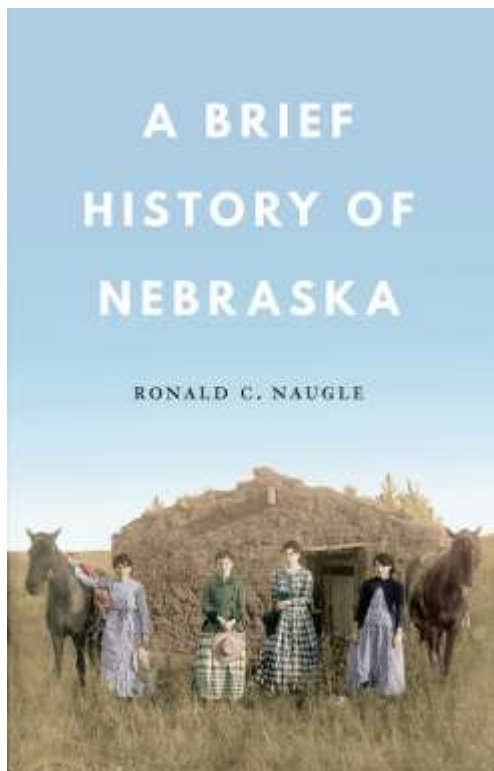
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Our new book: A Brief History of Nebraska

May 31, 2018



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Naugle, a leading Nebraska historian, sums up a complex story in an easy-to-read narrative divided into short chapters. It's a great gift to introduce people to our history, and a way for history buffs to see the "big picture."

Nebraska has been inundated by ancient seas, carved by glaciers, and settled by ancient cultures who learned to survive in a land prone to extremes of climate.

As a state, Nebraska was born out of the Civil War, shaped by railroads, and built by immigrants. Settlers were drawn by promises of free land and abundant rain. They endured droughts and economic depressions. They fought for political reforms, fought world wars, and sometimes fought each other.

Along the way Nebraskans chose a unique form of government and re-invented their communities under new conditions. *A Brief History of Nebraska* is a story of continual change, the back story of the place and people we know today.

The \$14.95 book is available at bookstores and online booksellers, or directly from History Nebraska at its sites (in Lincoln at the Nebraska History Museum and the State Capitol, also at Chimney Rock and Fort Robinson), and by phone at 402-471-3447.

Ronald C. Naugle is a professor emeritus of history at Nebraska Wesleyan University and chair of the Nebraska Hall of Fame Commission. He is the co-author, with John J. Montag and James C. Olson, of *History of Nebraska*, Fourth Edition (University of Nebraska Press), winner of the Nebraska Book Award; co-author, with Patricia Cox Crews, of *Nebraska Quilts and Quiltmakers* (Nebraska), winner of the Smithsonian's Frost Prize for Distinguished Scholarship in American Crafts; and editor of other books including *Ham, Eggs, and Corncake: A Nebraska Territorial Diary* (Nebraska).

[Find more History Nebraska books here.](#)

Categories:
[books](#)

Three New Properties Added to the National Register of Historic Places

May 31, 2018



The towns of Tekamah, Emerson, and Venango are the proud homes of properties to be listed on the [National Register of Historic Places](#). The Nebraska State Historic Preservation Board met in January 2018 to review nominations for these properties plus a Multiple Property Document for Nebraska's Carnegie Libraries. The board approved all four nominations and forwarded them to the National Park Service for listing in the National Register.

The properties:

Tekamah Auditorium, 1315 K St., Tekamah (Burt County). The building is significant for its association with New Deal work programs and for its roles as a government and community center. The auditorium's primary space was constructed by the Works Progress Administration between 1936 and 1938; a single story addition was built in 1950. It now serves as city offices and a rentable event space.



Auditorium in 1954, above; present-day, below.



Emerson City Park, a full city block along Main Street between 4th and 5th Streets, Emerson (Dixon County). Historic arched entrances (top photo) stand at the corners of the park. Each archway was constructed by a different local organization and varies in size and appearance; an elaborate fountain (below) stands at the center of the grounds. The park is significant as a local gathering place from the early 1900s until present.



Venango Public School, 201 E. Washington St., Venango (Perkins County). The school is a fine architectural example of an early-twentieth-century school building, and also representative of the development of education in Nebraska. It is a two-story-over-raised-basement Colonial Revival building, with a mid-century addition that contains an industrial technology shop, gymnasium, lunchroom, and band room. The school exemplifies the movement away from one- and two-room schoolhouses toward consolidated school districts with buildings containing individual classrooms for each subject and specialized spaces for science, home economics, typing, and a separate library. The building has not held classes since 2001 and is now in private ownership.



The Nebraska Carnegie Libraries, 1902-1922. This Multiple Property Document can be applied to Carnegie libraries throughout the entire state. The document consolidates the historic background information for the sixty-nine Carnegie libraries that were built in Nebraska, laying the groundwork for future nominations of individual libraries.

--David Calease, National Register Coordinator / Historical Markers Coordinator

Categories:

[National Register of Historic Places; Emerson; Tekamah; Venango](#)

Lincoln Chicken War

May 31, 2018



Sometimes it takes a good guy with a chicken to stop a bad guy with a chicken. Consider this strange tale about the founder of today's *Lincoln Journal Star* and his revenge on his hen-raising neighbors.

Town and city residents used to keep chickens and even milk cows on their property. On April 12, 1890, journalist J. D. Calhoun of the *Lincoln Weekly Herald* told a story that he attributed to Charles H. Gere, publisher of the *Nebraska State Journal* (and future namesake of Lincoln's Gere Library):



Charles H. Gere. Detail of RG956-13-2

“For some years after I was married I tried to do a little gardening both for the exercise involved and the product of the labor. I was greatly annoyed every spring by the ravages of my neighbors’ hens. I shooed them out, I remonstrated with their owners, I threw rocks, I built fences, I bought a trained dog, but all in vain. All summer I planted and hoed and watered in vain. . . .

“Finally I began to dream of revenge and an inspiration came to me. That spring I planted no garden, but I went to a butcher and had him select for me three dozen of the oldest and biggest Cochin hens he got into his shop. It was a fine lot, not one in it that weighed less than ten pounds. Just at the right juncture in the spring I had them put in my barn. The quarter in which I live was more village-like than it is now and all my neighbors had more or less garden as well as chickens. They also had children who minded them off the gardens—except mine.

“Just when all the garden stuff was in a fair state of early growth, tender succulent and tempting to hens, when the children were all at school the men down town and the women busy, I opened my barn door and turned out my hens . . . I had inadvertently forgotten to feed or water them for three days, and within twenty minutes after they were released there wasn’t a green thing above ground within half a block of me. I collected my hens into the barn without attracting attention, and when the ravages were discovered each neighbor attributed it to the chickens of the other. Next evening there was a neighborly mass meeting, and a good deal of excitement, but a solemn agreement was made and ratified never, never, to keep any more chickens. I had the butcher come up and haul mine away after night, and to this day the people in the vicinity of J and Seventeenth [in Lincoln] don’t know to whom they owe their deliverance from the chicken scourge.”

Did it really happen that way? Or was it just an amusing story? It’s hard to say, but it speaks to a genuine movement in that era to regulate the presence of farm animals within city limits.



Mrs. Powers with her chickens, Kearney, Nebraska, 1907. RG2608-0-2608



This child may be up to no good. Probably Neligh, Nebraska, undated. RG2836-21

Photo at top of page: detail of RG3316-1, undated photo from the yard of 4123 N. 36th Ave., apparently in Omaha.

Categories:

[chickens](#), [newspapers](#), [city life](#)

<https://history.nebraska.gov/blog/chimney-rock-neligh-mill-featured-2018-statewide-summer-travel-programs>

Chimney Rock, Neligh Mill featured in 2018 statewide summer travel programs

May 31, 2018



Two History Nebraska sites are participating in summer programs designed to get you out on the road.

Chimney Rock National Historic Site is part of the Nebraska Passport program, while Neligh Mill State Historic Site is part of the Great Park Pursuit. Both of these programs are fun ways to visit Nebraska sites and win prizes. Here's how they work:



Nebraska Passport

- At each Passport stop participants visit they receive a stamp, either in a Nebraska Passport booklet or a digital stamp on the Nebraska Passport App. It is acceptable for an individual to collect stamps in both the booklet and the app and submit all their stamps for prizes.
- Stamps can be collected from May 1 to September 30.
- Participants then turn in their stamps and receive prizes.
- There is no fee to participate in the Nebraska Passport program. There is no purchase necessary to receive Passport stamps at the Passport stops.

Go to <http://nebraskapassport.com/>. Learn more about [Chimney Rock](#).



Great Park Pursuit

The Great Park Pursuit (GPP) encourages participants to visit up to 20 GPP sites located across Nebraska between May 1 and September 17, 2018. Players follow clues that will lead them to a GPP post, where they use a pencil to make an impression of the post or use the [mobile app](#) to prove they were there. Prizes and entry into drawings are based on the number of impressions collected. The grand prize is an outdoor recreation package with a retail value of \$750.

Go to <https://negpp.org/>. Learn more about [Neligh Mill](#).

<https://history.nebraska.gov/blog/which-earliest-known-picture-nebraska-event>

Which is the earliest known picture of a Nebraska event?

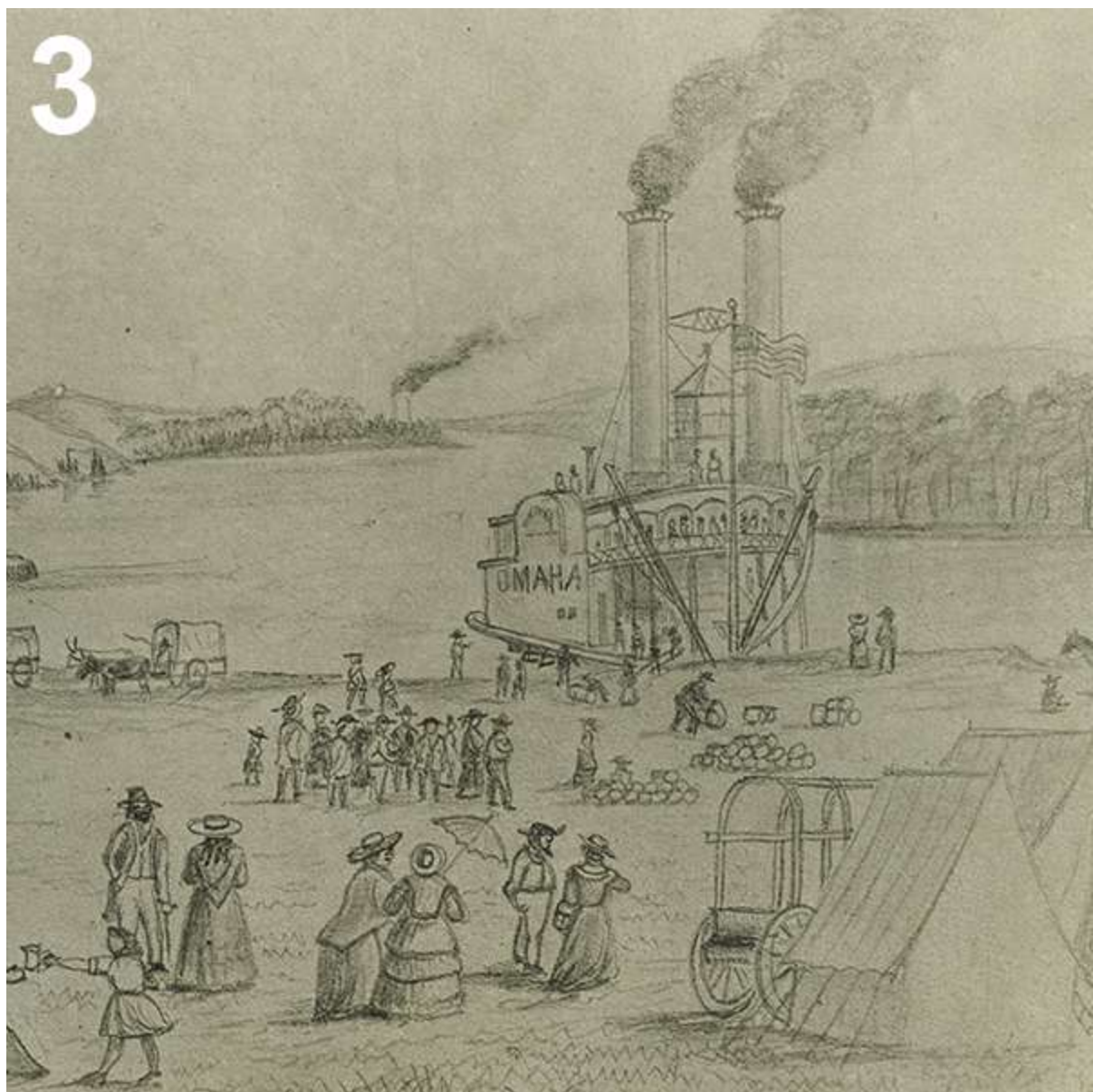
May 31, 2018

Make your guess, then scroll down for the answer.



2







Have you made up your mind? Scroll down...

v

v

v

v

v

v

#1. This photograph was made in an Oglala Lakota village in Nebraska Territory's North Platte Valley in 1859. It is the earliest known photo of a Lakota village, but is not the earliest known Nebraska image. (NSHS RG3122-1)

#2. This is Titian Ramsay Peale's 1820 watercolor of the steamboat *Western Engineer* at Engineer Cantonment north of present-day Omaha. If you follow our blog, you already [know all about it](#). It's old, but not the oldest.

#3. George Simons' 1854 sketch of Mormon emigrants landing at Florence, Nebraska. (NSHS RG 2271-1-5)

#4. And we have a winner!

Spanish soldiers fought a bloody battle with Pawnee and Oto Indians near present-day Columbus, Nebraska, in 1720. Few of the Spaniards made it home alive. A hide painting recorded the event. It is the earliest known illustration of an event in the place we now call Nebraska.

This is partly a story of national rivalries. Spain, France, and Britain were jockeying for position in North America. Each wanted to control the valuable fur trade. In 1720 the Spanish government heard rumors that French traders were working the region around the Platte and Missouri rivers. In June Don Pedro de Villasur led a band of Spanish troops north from Santa Fe. On the morning of August 14, a combined force of Pawnees and Otos attacked the Villasur party at the confluence of the Loup and Platte rivers. A [historical marker](#) commemorates the event.

We don't know when the hide painting known as Segesser II was made, but it dates at least to the mid-18th century. The faded original is in the collections of the [New Mexico History Museum](#) in Santa Fe. The NMHM believes it is the work of multiple artists who "were indigenous New Mexicans with tribal affiliation who had the benefit of eyewitness descriptions."

When the painting became widely known in the 1980s, History Nebraska artist Curt Peacock decided to paint a replica. He wanted to re-create the scene as it looked when the painting was new and the colors were bright. For authenticity, he replicated the hues of the painting's natural dyes on cowhide. A detail of his replica is shown above.

And here's a close-up of the dying Villasur.



Villasur wasn't the first European to reach the Platte River. Historian Harlan Seyfer writes about the "Changing Consensus on the European Discovery of the Platte River" in the Summer 2018 issue of *Nebraska History*. The same issue features articles about Nebraska bootlegger "Queen" Louise Vinciguerra and the time when one of Nebraska's best lending libraries was a sod dugout in Nemaha County.

History Nebraska members receive quarterly issues of *Nebraska History* as part of their [membership](#); single issues are available for \$7 from the Nebraska History Museum (402-471-3447).

—David L. Bristow, Editor

Categories:
[photography](#), [paintings](#)